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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Who's Funding the 'Contras'?

The Reagan Administration is moving into higher gear in its determination to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, and we may consequently expect a tidal wave of leaks about Nicaragua's arms buildup and planned subversion of its neighbors. The pattern was set with the story, planted on the night of Reagan's re-election, about the supposed arrival of MIGs in Nicaragua. Now the Pentagon is about to release to Congress—with much fanfare, no doubt—a twenty-three-page report on the Nicaraguan peril, tentatively titled "The Soviet-Cuban Connection."

This is all part of the barrage to persuade Congress to resume aid to the *contras*. The money keeping them going in the interim is chastely referred to in most of the press as "private funding," although the fencing of aid through such U.S. clients as Honduras, El Salvador and Israel has been noted. The phrase "private funding" has a cozy ring to it, as though it were charity, like a contribution to the Boston Philharmonic, rather than support for 10,000 to 15,000 murderers.

On January 21, Alfonso Chardy of *The Miami Herald* described in detail how some of this funding is organized. A network of millionaires, retired officers and interested émigrés give the *contras* as much as \$1 million a month. A central figure in the network is Gen. John Singlaub, retired, head of U.S. forces in Korea until relieved of his command by President Carter for publicly criticizing U.S. policy. He is now president of the World Anti-Communist League, an organization of ultrarightists and outright fascists intimately involved with death squads in Central and Latin America.

Singlaub, who has sat on a Pentagon advisory panel, told Chardy that high-ranking officials at the Pentagon—including such anti-Sandinista point men as Fred Iklé, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and Nestor Sanchez, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Inter-American Affairs—are helping coordinate "relief" efforts,

including the shipment of matériel to Central America on U.S. Navy and Air Force craft.

Singlaub also told Chardy that he and other former military and intelligence officers collect about \$500,000 a month through an organization named U.S. Council for World Freedom.

This is by no means the extent of Singlaub's sinister activities. He is a founder of the Institute for Regional and International Studies in Boulder, Colorado, which has announced it will train *contras* if Congress does not restore aid. Singlaub is, by the way, an ornament at meetings organized by *Soldier of Fortune*, the magazine for literate mercenaries. He belongs to the Louisiana-based Council on National Policy, which also raises money for the *contras*. It is a gold-plated leviathan of the ultraright, including among its members Joseph Coors, the Hunt brothers, Pat Boone, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson of Christian Broadcasting Network and Senators Jesse Helms and John East of North Carolina.

Thus many of the prime funders of Reagan's re-election campaign have, without missing a beat, shifted their resources to the Committee to Install Arturo in Managua. This, of course, is a violation of the Neutrality Act, which forbids private sedition of a government with which the United States has diplomatic relations. And since we might assume they are deducting their donations to the *contras* as charitable contributions, we might conclude that the taxpayers are funding the *contras* after all, the express will of Congress notwithstanding.

